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Guy's Home Inspection Services E-Newsletter

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Greetings!

Welcome to my e-newsletter. In this and subsequent newsletters, I will attempt to provide information that members of the real estate community will find worthwhile. If you prefer not to receive this, simply reply with "unsubscribe" in the subject line of an e-mail. If you would like to read information on a particular topic, let me know & I will attempt to provide pertinent information in an upcoming newsletter. Finally, if you would like to submit something to be included, please let me know. I will identify you as the author or source (unless you prefer to remain anonymous).

Office of the Month:

Congratulations to Coldwell Banker Triad, Eastchester Dr. High Point

Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters

First there were fuses, then breakers, and then GFCI. Now comes AFCI! Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI) are the latest invention from Cutler-Hammer that became code for new residential construction beginning January 1, 2002.

AFCI are intended to protect property whereas GFCI were intended to protect people from electrical malfunctions. GFCI, used primarily in wet locations, help prevent electrical shock. AFCI protect property from fires resulting from arcing. For 2002, AFCI are required in bedroom

areas only due to this being the most hazardous area for fires (especially if you sleep as soundly as I do!).

What does this mean to the homeowner?

First of all, it means better protection from electrical fires. Secondly, it may mean nuisance trips, especially if you are the type that turns off the vacuum cleaner by jerking the plug out of the wall before turning off the appliance. Old habits are hard to break but one or two trips to the electrical panel should be enough to cure anyone of this habit, especially if the main panel is outside or in an otherwise inconvenient location.

What is the future of AFCI?

Currently, AFCI are proposed for all locations in the 2005 electrical code. This will allow time to "work out any bugs" plus allow time for the manufacturers to bring the price down to a more reasonable level.

Conclusion

Although AFCIs have received some criticism, all indications are that they are a way to make the homes of America safer, which has to be a good thing.

More Questions for Your Home Inspector

- Do you check for gas leaks?
- Do you check gas furnaces and ranges for carbon monoxide?
- Do you take payment at closing?

Aluminum Wiring

Many of you are familiar with the hazards associated with aluminum wiring. The state has issued standard verbiage to be used in home inspection reports:

"Aluminum wiring is installed on 120VAC branch electrical circuits in the subject house. These single strand, branch circuit aluminum wires were used widely in houses during the mid 1960s and early 1970s. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, problems due to expansion can cause overheating at connections between the wire and devices (switches and outlets) or at splices, which has resulted in fires. For further information on aluminum wiring contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission via the Internet at www.cpsc.gov/. It is recommended that a licensed electrician evaluate the electrical system."

According to the CPSC, the best way to eliminate potential problems with aluminum wiring is to rewire the house. However, this is typically not a practical solution. The only acceptable repair is the use of a special crimp connector that consists of a piece of copper wire attached to the aluminum wire with a specially designed metal sleeve and powered crimping tool. The metal sleeve is called a COPALUM parallel splice connector and is manufactured only by AMP (now Tyco). Only certain electricians are authorized to install COPALUM. These technicians are thoroughly trained by the manufacturer to use the tool properly.

Happy Thanksgiving!